

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 OIC-02 CU-02 AGR-05 DOTE-00 HEW-02

HUD-01 INT-05 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

EPA-01 INR-07 L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 OES-03 SS-15

SP-02 FEAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

SAB-01 /091 W

----- 075259

O P 071232Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9346

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR ECLA PN

SUBJECT: HABITAT CONFERENCE - PANAMA CANAL RESOLUTION

REF STATE 157315 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY. IN FURTHER PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. DEL, PANAMANIAN DEL REJECTED U.S. SUGGESTIONS FOR MODIFYING TEXT OF PANAMANIAN RESOLUTION ON CANAL AND THREATENED ADVERSE PUBLICITY FOR THE US IF WE DID NOT ACCEPT RESOLUTION. PANAMANIAN DELEGATION INTRODUCED RESOLUTION AT JUL 3 ECLA MEETING AND RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM ELEVEN OTHER DELEGATIONS, SOME CALLING FOR APPROVAL BY ACCLAMATION. US DEL MADE A STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD EXPLAINING WHY THE US COULD NOT SUPPORT RESOLUTION, AND TWO DELEGATIONS SAID THEY WERE UNINSTRUCTED ON THIS ISSUE. MEETING AGREED TO INCLUDE RESOLUTION AND STATEMENTS OF DELEGATIONS IN OFFICIAL RECORD. END SUMMARY.

1. US DEL MET PRIVATELY WITH PANAMANIAN DEL CHIEF RODRIGUEZ

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IN MORNING JUL 3 AND SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS PER REFTTEL A

TO PANAMANIAN TEXT. RODRIQUEZ REJECTED OUR SUGGESTIONS. HE PARTICULARLY OPPOSED ANY PHRASE RECOGNIZING THE "CONTINUING US INTEREST" IN THE PANAMA CANAL, SINCE THIS WOULD RUN COUNTER TO THE TACK-KISSINGER DECLARATION OF FEB 1974 WHICH REJECTED THE CONCEPT OF PERPETUITY. WE RESPONDED THAT A REFERENCE TO THE US INTEREST IN THE CANAL WAS ESSENTIAL, SINCE THE RESOLUTION SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES IN A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT. RODRIQUEZ SAID THAT THE PHRASE "JUST AND EQUITABLE" SHOULD COVER OUR CONCERNS. HE ALSO OBJECTED STRONGLY TO ELIMINATING THE IDEA THAT PANAMA SHOULD EXERCISE "FULLY" ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OVER THE CANAL.

2. WHEN WE CONTINUED TO INSIST ON A MORE BALANCED DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS, RODRIQUEZ OPENLY THREATENED ADVERSE PUBLICITY FOR THE US OVER ITS OPPOSITION TO THIS RESOLUTION. HE SAID WE COULD ILL AFFORD A BAD PRESS ON THIS QUESTION IN VIEW OF THE NEGATIVE REACTION IN LATIN AMERICA TO SECRETARY SIMON'S RECENT STATEMENTS ABOUT OPEC. U.S. DEL AND PANAMANIAN DEL AGREED TO SEEK FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS FROM THEIR CAPITALS ABOUT IMPOSSIBLE CHANGES IN TEXT. LATER IN THE DAY, PANAMANIAN DEL INFORMED US THAT IT HAD CHECKED BACK WITH PANAMA AND HAD BEEN TOLD TO STAY WITH ORIGINAL TEXT.

3. AT END OF AFTERNOON SESSION JUL 3, UNDER "OTHER BUSINESS", RODRIQUEZ FORMALLY INTRODUCED THE PANAMANIAN RESOLUTION. TO SUPPORT PRINCIPLE OF A NATION'S SOVEREIGN CONTROL OF ITS OWN RESOURCES, RODRIQUEZ CITED THE "DECLARATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER," ARTICLE 16 OF THE "CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES," AND POINTS 3 AND 4 IN THE TACK-KISSINGER "JOINT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES", HE THEN GAVE IMPASSIONED EXPLANATION OF HOW PRESENT CANAL ZONE ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH PERMIT PANAMA CITY TO EXPAND ONLY IN AN EASTWARDS DIRECTION, CREATES DISTORTIONS AND RESTRICTS PANAMA'S HUMAN SETTLEMENTS POLICY. HE ASKED FOR LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY BEHIND PANAMA'S POSITION.

4. COSTA RICA STRONGLY SUPPORTED PANAMA'S "JUST ASPIRATIONS" AND VENEZUELA, SECONDED BY CUBA, ASKED THE CONFERENCE TO ADAPT THE PANAMANIAN RESOLUTION BY ACCLAMATION.

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5. US DEL INTERVENED AT THIS POINT AND MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT. BEGIN TEXT. MY DELEGATION REGRETS THAT IT CANNOT SUPPORT THE DRAFT RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA AND WOULD ABSTAIN IF THE MATTER SHOULD COME TO A VOTE. IN THE VIEW OF MY GOVT, THIS RESOLUTION GOES BEYOND THE JOINT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AGREED TO BY THE GOVTS OF PANAMA AND THE US IN FEB 1974. THAT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES, UPON WHICH THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS ARE BASED,

RECOGNIZES THE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES IN THE CANAL. WE
WOULD NOTE OUR CONVICTION THAT BOTH COUNTRIES ARE WORKING TOWARD
A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT. I SHOULD ALSO NOTE THAT
BOTH COUNTRIES EXPRESSED THIS MUTUAL INTEREST MOST RECENTLY IN
A JOINT STATEMENT OFFERED AT THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN MAY.
MR. CHAIRMAN, I REQUEST THAT THE RECORD REFLECT THE VIEWS OF
MY DELEGATION. END TEXT.

6. THE FOLLOWING DELEGATIONS THEN MADE STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR
THE PANAMANIAN RESOLUTION: JAMAICA, COLUMBIA, GUATEMALA, PERU,
CHILE, EL SALVADOR, HAITI AND ECUADOR. GUYANA AND HONDURAS SAID
THEY WOULD HAVE TO ABSTAIN IF THE RESOLUTION CAME TO A VOTE
BECAUSE THEY LACKED INSTRUCTIONS, AND NICARAGUA MADE A NON-
COMMITAL STATEMENT HOPING FOR A FAVORABLE SOLUTION THROUGH
NEGOTIATIONS BUT NOT MENTIONING THE PANAMANIAN RESOLUTION
SPECIFICALLY.

7. THE PRESIDENT OF THE MEETING (GOVERNOR OF CARACAS DIEGO
ARRIA) SAID THAT SINCE THE RESOLUTION DID NOT PERTAIN DIRECTLY
TO THE SUBJECT OF THE CONFERENCE, HE WOULD NOT ASK FOR A VOTE
ON THE RESOLUTION. HE WOULD INSTEAD INCLUDE THE RESOLUTION IN
THE RECORD TOGETHER WITH THE STATEMENTS OF ALL THE DELEGATIONS
WHO SPOKE ON THE SUBJECT. THE MEETING ACCEPTED THIS PROCEDURE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CARACA06848
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750233-0913
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750778/aaaacryi.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 157315
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <10 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HABITAT CONFERENCE - PANAMA CANAL RESOLUTION
TAGS: PFOR, PORO, PN, PANAMA CANAL, ECLA, HABITAT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006